

What is claimed is:

1. A device comprising a processor that controls asynchronous delivery of media content over a communication channel to facilitate playback of the media content through a remote device, wherein the playback of the media content is enabled at a predetermined time after the delivery of the media content.

2. The device defined in claim 1, wherein said device delivers the media content.

3. The device defined in claim 1, wherein said communication channel includes a satellite communication channel.

4. The device defined in claim 2, wherein said device is a server computer.

5. The device defined in claim 1, wherein said device is a server computer.

6. The device defined in claim 1, wherein the delivery of the media content is controlled in accordance with a digital rights management scheme.

7. The device defined in claim 1, wherein said remote device includes a client computer.

8. The device defined in claim 1, wherein said remote device is a portable device.

9. The device defined in claim 8, wherein said portable device is a wireless device.

10. The device defined in claim 9, wherein said wireless device is a cellular phone.

11. A device comprising a processor that controls asynchronous delivery of media content over a communication channel including a satellite system to facilitate playback of the media content through a remote device, wherein the playback of the media content is enabled at a predetermined time after the delivery of the media content.

12. A device comprising a processor executing software instructions including a software module comprising:

a software delivery module that controls asynchronous delivery of media content over a communication channel to facilitate playback of the media content through a remote device, wherein the playback of the media content is enabled at a first predetermined time after the delivery of the media content.

13. The device defined in claim 12, wherein said device delivers said media content.

14. The device defined in claim 13, wherein said device is a server computer.

15. The device defined in claim 14, wherein said device further comprises a memory portion that stores at least a portion of said software module.

16. The device defined in claim 12, wherein said device further comprises a memory portion that stores at least a portion of said software module.

17. The device defined in claim 12, wherein the software delivery module generates indicator data for the remote device that provide an indication

of a second predetermined time when the media content will be delivered to the remote device, said device transmitting the indicator data to the remote device at the second predetermined time.

18. The device defined in claim 17, wherein the remote device initiates a session with the software delivery module at the second predetermined time.

19. The device defined in claim 18, wherein the remote device initiates the session by making a request for a connection with said device.

20. The device defined in claim 19, wherein said device establishes the connection in response to the request.

21. The device defined in claim 20, wherein said device provides the remote device with an indication that a user of the remote device is entitled to the media content.

22. The device defined in claim 21, wherein remote device accepts the media content for delivery unless the remote device already has the media content.

23. The device defined in claim 12, wherein the software module further comprises a software recovery module, which provides control information to the software delivery module to enable the automatic delivery of disrupted data without delivering data that has already been successfully delivered to the remote device.

24. The device defined in claim 12, wherein the software module further comprises a software database interface module that processes requests to

retrieve information from a database including media content information related to the media content.

25. The device defined in claim 24, wherein the software database interface module receives a request for the information from the remote device, submits the request to the database, receives the information from the database, and sends the information to the remote device.

26. The device defined in claim 24, wherein the software database interface module receives a request for the information from the software delivery module, submits the request to the database, receives the information, and sends the information to the software delivery module to facilitate the delivery of the media content to the remote device.

27. The device defined in claim 24, wherein the media content information includes at least an identifier identifying a media category with which the media content is associated.

28. The device defined in claim 27, wherein the media category is a segment of an episode with which the media content is associated.

29. The device defined in claim 27, wherein the media category is an episode with which the media content is associated.

30. The device defined in claim 27, wherein the media category is a series with which the media content is associated.

31. The device defined in claim 27, wherein the media category is a package with which the media content is associated.

32. The device defined in claim 31, wherein the package is defined in accordance with user statistical information related to media usage by a user employing the remote device.

33. The device defined in claim 12, wherein said software delivery module controls the delivery of the media content based on user statistical information concerning media usage by a user employing the remote device.

34. The device defined in claim 33, wherein the software delivery module controls the delivery of the media content in segments, each having a size which depends on the user statistical information.

35. The device defined in claim 25, wherein the software module further comprises a software user interface module that processes requests for the information from a user of the remote device and submits the requests for the information to the software database interface module for retrieval from the database.

36. The device defined in claim 35, wherein the software user interface module further comprises a graphical user interface.

37. The device defined in claim 36, wherein said graphical user interface is implemented via a web site.

38. The device defined in claim 24, wherein the software module further comprises a software storage module that facilitates the storage of media content in a media content repository by a content provider.

39. The device defined in claim 38, wherein the software database interface module receives a request for the information from the software storage

module, submits the request to the database, receives the information from the database, and sends the information to the software storage module to facilitate storage of the media content in the media content repository.

5 40. The device defined in claim 38, wherein the software module further comprises a software content provider interface module that processes requests for the information from a content provider and submits the requests for the information to the software database interface module for retrieval from the database.

10 41. The device defined in claim 40, wherein said software content provider interface module further comprises a graphical user interface.

15 42. The device defined in claim 41, wherein said graphical user interface is implemented via a web site.

20 43. A device comprising a processor that controls playback of media content delivered asynchronously over a communication channel by a remote device, wherein the playback of the media content is enabled at a predetermined time after the delivery of the media content.

 44. The device defined in claim 43, wherein said media content is not detectable by a user of the device until the predetermined time.

25 45. The device defined in claim 43, wherein said processor controls the playback of media content via a display.

 46. The device defined in claim 43, further comprising a display, wherein said processor controls the playback of media content via said display.

 47. The device defined in claim 43, wherein said device is a computer.

48. The device defined in claim 43, wherein said device is a client computer.

49. The device defined in claim 47, wherein said communication channel includes a network and said computer is coupled to said remote device via the network.

50. The device defined in claim 43, wherein said device is a portable device.

51. The device defined in claim 50, wherein said device is a wireless device.

52. The device defined in claim 51, wherein said wireless device is a cellular phone.

53. The device defined in claim 51, wherein said wireless device includes a display and said processor controls the playback of media content via said display.

54. A device comprising a processor executing software instructions including a software module comprising:

a first software playback module that controls the playback of media content delivered asynchronously over a communication channel by a remote device, wherein the playback of the media content is enabled at a predetermined time after the delivery of the media content.

55. The device defined in claim 54, wherein the media content is not detectable by a user of the device until the predetermined time.

56. The device defined in claim 54, wherein the delivery of media content is controlled in accordance with a digital rights management scheme.

57. The device defined in claim 54, wherein said communication channel includes a satellite communication channel.

58. The device defined in claim 54, wherein said first software playback module controls the playback of media content via a display.

59. The device defined in claim 54, further comprising a display, wherein said first software playback module controls the playback of media content via said display.

60. The device defined in claim 59, wherein said first software playback module comprises a graphical user interface through which the media content is displayed on said display.

61. The device defined in claim 60, wherein the media content is not detectable by a user of the device until the predetermined time.

62. The device defined in claim 54, wherein said software module further comprises a first software coordination module that coordinates the exchange of information with said remote device, the information including the media content.

63. The device defined in claim 62, wherein the information further includes user statistical information related to media usage by a user employing the device.

64. The device defined in claim 63, wherein the user statistical information is sent by the device to the remote device to facilitate the delivery of the media content to the device.

65. The device defined in claim 54, further comprising a storage area that stores media data including the media content.

66. The device defined in claim 65, wherein the media data includes a plurality of media files, the media content being formed from the plurality of media files in accordance with at least one predefined rule.

67. The device defined in claim 66, wherein at least one of the plurality of media files may be used to form a distinct media content.

68. The device defined in claim 54, wherein said software module further comprises a first registration module that receives user information from a user of the device, said device transmitting the user information to said remote device to facilitate the delivery of the media content to the device.

69. The device defined in claim 54, wherein the playback of media content is controlled based on user input.

70. The device defined in claim 69, wherein the user input is provided to said device using a remote control device which communicates with said device.

71. The device defined in claim 70, wherein the remote control device communicates with said device using infrared radiation.

72. The device defined in claim 54, wherein the software module further comprises a voice recognition software module, which receives user input

in the form of voice commands, said voice recognition software module converts said voice commands into electronic data and provides the first software playback module with said electronic data to facilitate the playback of media content.

73. A device comprising a processor that controls playback of media content delivered asynchronously from a remote device, wherein the device generates a notification to a user of said device upon receipt of the media content.

74. The device defined in claim 73, wherein the notification is an automatic notification.

75. The device defined in claim 73, wherein the notification is an audio notification.

76. The device defined in claim 73, wherein the notification is in the form of an e-mail.

77. The device defined in claim 73, wherein the playback of the media content is enabled at a predetermined time after the delivery of the media content.

78. The device defined in claim 77, wherein the notification is an automatic notification.

79. The device defined in claim 77, wherein the notification is an audio notification.

80. The device defined in claim 77, wherein the notification is in the form of an e-mail.

81. A device comprising a processor that controls playback of media content delivered asynchronously over a communication channel including a

satellite system by a remote device, wherein the playback of the media content is enabled at a predetermined time after the delivery of the media content.

82. A system for implementing a media content delivery and playback scheme, said system comprising:

a communication channel;

a first device that is coupled to said communication channel, said first device including a first processor that controls asynchronous delivery of media content over the communication channel; and

a second device that is coupled to said communication channel, said second device comprising a second processor that controls the playback of media content delivered asynchronously over the communication channel by the first device, wherein the playback of media content is enabled in said second device at a first predetermined time after the delivery of the media content.

83. The system defined in claim 82, wherein the media content is not detectable by a user of the second device until said predetermined time.

84. The system defined in claim 82, wherein the second device initiates a session with the first device at the predetermined time.

85. The system defined in claim 84, wherein the second device initiates the session by making a request for a connection with said first device.

86. The system defined in claim 85, wherein said first device establishes the connection in response to the request.

87. The system defined in claim 86, wherein said first device provides the second device with an indication that a user of the second device is entitled to the media content.

88. The system defined in claim 87, wherein the second device accepts the media content for delivery only if it does not already have the media content.

89. The system defined in claim 82, wherein said first device is a server computer and said second device is a client computer.

90. The system defined in claim 89, wherein said communication channel includes at least a portion of a network.

91. The system defined in claim 90, wherein said network is a local area network.

92. The system defined in claim 90, wherein said network is a wide area network.

93. The system defined in claim 90, wherein said communication channel includes at least a portion of the Internet.

94. The system defined in claim 82, wherein said first device is a server computer.

95. The system defined in claim 94, wherein said second device is a portable device.

96. The system defined in claim 95, wherein said portable device is a wireless device.

97. The system defined in claim 96, wherein said wireless device is a cellular phone.

98. The system defined in claim 95, wherein said communication channel includes a wireless network.

99. The system defined in claim 82, wherein said second device is a portable device.

5 100. The system defined in claim 99, wherein said portable device is a wireless device.

101. The system defined in claim 82, wherein the delivery of the media content from the first device to the second device is controlled in accordance with a digital rights management scheme.

10 102. A device comprising a processor that controls the delivery of media content over a communication channel to a remote device in one of a first mode and a second mode, wherein the first mode the processor controls the asynchronous delivery of media content over the communication channel to facilitate playback of the media content through the remote device, wherein the
15 103. The device defined by claim 102, wherein the playback of the media content is enabled at a predetermined time after the delivery of the media content.

20 104. The device defined in claim 102, wherein said device delivers the media content.

105. The device defined in claim 102, wherein said communication channel includes a satellite communication channel.

106. The device defined in claim 104, wherein said device is a server computer.

5 107. The device defined in claim 102, wherein said device is a server computer.

108. The device defined in claim 102, wherein the playback of the media content is controlled in accordance with a digital rights management scheme.

109. The device defined in claim 102, wherein said remote device includes a client computer.

110. The device defined in claim 102, wherein said remote device is a portable device.

111. The device defined in claim 110, wherein said portable device is a wireless device.

112. The device defined in claim 111, wherein said wireless device is a cellular phone.

113. A device comprising a processor that controls playback of media content delivered over a communication channel by a remote device, said processor controlling the playback of media content in one a first mode and a second mode, wherein the first mode the processor controls the playback of media content delivered asynchronously by the remote device, wherein the second mode

the processor controls the playback of media content delivered synchronously by the remote device.

114. The device defined in claim 113, wherein the playback of the media content is enabled at a predetermined time after the delivery of the media content.

115. The device defined in claim 113, wherein the media content is not detectable by a user of the device until the predetermined time.

116. A device comprising a processor that controls the delivery of media content over a communication channel to a remote device in one of a first mode and a second mode, wherein the first mode the processor controls the unicast-based delivery of media content over the communication channel to facilitate playback of the media content through the remote device, wherein the second mode the processor controls the multicast-based delivery of media content over the communication channel to facilitate the playback of the media content through the remote device.

117. The device defined by claim 116, wherein the playback of the media content is enabled at a predetermined time after the delivery of the media content.

118. The device defined in claim 116, wherein said device delivers the media content.

119. The device defined in claim 116, wherein said communication channel includes a satellite communication channel.

120. The device defined in claim 118, wherein said device is a server computer.

121. The device defined in claim 116, wherein said device is a server computer.

5 122. The device defined in claim 116, wherein the playback of the media content is controlled in accordance with a digital rights management scheme.

123. The device defined in claim 116, wherein said remote device includes a client computer.

10 124. The device defined in claim 116, wherein said remote device is a portable device.

125. The device defined in claim 124, wherein said portable device is a wireless device.

15 126. The device defined in claim 125, wherein said wireless device is a cellular phone.

20 127. A device comprising a processor that controls playback of media content delivered over a communication channel by a remote device, said processor controlling the playback of media content in one of a first mode and a second mode, wherein the first mode the processor controls the playback of media content delivered by the remote device via a unicast mode of delivery, wherein the second mode the processor controls the playback of media content delivered by the remote device via a multicast mode of delivery.

128. The device defined in claim 127, wherein the playback of the media content is enabled at a predetermined time after the delivery of the media content.

129. The device defined in claim 127, wherein the media content is not detectable by a user of the device until the predetermined time.

130. A device comprising a processor that controls asynchronous delivery of media content over a communication channel to facilitate playback of the media content through a remote device; wherein said device receives a request for a connection from the remote device; establishes the connection in response to the request, provides the remote device with a first indication that a user of the remote device is entitled to the media content, and receives from the remote device a second indication that the remote device will accept the media content for delivery unless the remote device already has the media content.

131. The device defined in claim 130, wherein the first indication includes a first list of a first group of media content items including at least a first media content item, which is the media content.

132. The device defined in claim 131, wherein the second indication includes a second list of a second group of media content items including at least a second media content item, which is the media content.

133. The device defined in claim 132, wherein the second group of media content items includes a plurality of media content items including at least the second media content item, said second group of media content items being a

group of media content items that the remote device will accept for delivery from the device.

134. A device comprising a processor that controls playback of media content delivered asynchronously over a communication channel by a remote device; wherein said device makes a request for a connection to the remote device, receives a connection from the remote device in response to the request, receives a first indication from the remote device that a user of the device is entitled to the media content from the remote device, and provides a second indication to the remote device that said device will accept the media content for delivery unless said device already has the media content.

135. The device defined in claim 134, wherein the first indication includes a first list of a first group of media content items including at least a first media content item, which is the media content.

136. The device defined in claim 135, wherein the second indication includes a second list of a second group of media content items including at least a second media content item, which is the media content.

137. The device defined in claim 136, wherein the second group of media content items includes a plurality of media content items including at least the second media content item, said second group of media content items being a group of media content items that said device will accept for delivery from the remote device.

138. A device comprising a processor that controls playback of media content delivered asynchronously over a communication channel by a remote

device, wherein said device is capable of providing an indication to another on behalf of a user of said device, said indication being of a location where the media content may be found.

139. A device comprising a processor that controls playback of media content delivered asynchronously over a communication channel by a remote device, wherein said device is capable of providing a portion of the media content to another on behalf of a user of said device.

140. The device defined in claim 139, wherein the portion of the media content may be provided as an attachment to an e-mail.

141. A computer program product for use in a device having a processor for executing software instructions, said computer program product comprising:

a computer usable medium having computer readable program code means embodied therein for causing the device to control the asynchronous delivery of media content over a communication channel to facilitate playback of the media content through a remote device, the playback of the media content not being enabled until a first predetermined time.

142. A computer program product for use in a device having a processor for executing software instructions, said computer program product comprising:

a computer usable medium having computer readable program code means embodied therein for causing the device to control playback of media content delivered asynchronously over a communication channel by a remote

device, the playback of the media content not being enabled until a predetermined time.

143. A method of implementing a media content delivery and playback scheme, said method comprising the steps of:

5 delivering media content asynchronously via a communication channel for remote playback of the media content, wherein the remote playback of the media content is enabled at a predetermined time after the delivery of the media content.

144. The method defined in claim 143, wherein the media content is not detectable until said predetermined time.

145. The method defined in claim 143, further comprising the steps of:
receiving the media content; and
enabling the playback of the media content at the predetermined time.

146. The method defined in claim 145, further comprising the step of:
conducting the playback of the media content after the step of enabling the
15 playback of the media content at the predetermined time.

147. The method defined in claim 146, wherein the step of conducting comprises the step of displaying the media content.

148. A method of implementing a media content delivery and playback scheme, said method comprising the steps of:

20 receiving media content which is delivered asynchronously via a communication channel; and

enabling the playback of the media content at a predetermined time after the receipt of the media content.

149. The method defined in claim 148, further comprising the step of detecting said media content at the predetermined time.

150. The method defined in claim 148, further comprising the step of providing a notification of receipt of the media content.